

## *Along the Same Street*

Comprehension Questions • Questions for Thoughts • Topics for Writing

NOTE: This list of questions was created for a group of students at Shizuoka University, taking an all-English seminar in International Japan Studies.

### **Reading 1 (Chapters 1 ~ 7, pp. 1 ~ 18)**

#### **Comprehension Questions**

- 1.1 Who does Jii-chan describe as “beasts”?
- 1.2 What prompts Jii-chan to begin his explanation of the “beasts”?
- 1.3 How old is the narrator (Kenta Ishiguro) when Jii-chan tells him about the “beasts”?
- 1.4 Who else, besides the narrator, hears what Jii-chan says about the “beasts”?
- 1.5 Who in his family does Kenta tell what Jii-chan said?
- 2.1 As a little boy, what creatures did Kenta enjoy catching with his grandfather?
- 2.2 What did his grandfather make with bamboo and wood?
- 2.3 Why, during the New Year’s holidays, would Jii-chan put slices of tangerines in the tree near his house?
- 2.4 Why does Jii-chan feel blessed?
- 3.1 What does Kenta worry would happen if more people knew how wonderful Mioyama was?
- 4.1 Where did Jii-chan claim the central pillar of his house came from?
- 4.2 Where was Jii-chan’s bathtub?
- 4.3 Who made the tops that are all around Jii-chan’s house?
- 5.1 According to Jii-chan’s story, how many Ishiguros are there?
- 5.2 According to Jii-chan, which animals count as Ishiguros—and which don’t?
- 5.3 Why did the number of Jii-chan’s rice fields decrease?
- 5.4 How does Kenta explain his high ability in math to his teacher?
- 6.1 As a boy, where did Kenta’s father like to hide?
- 6.2 How many children does Jii-chan have?
- 6.3 Why did the sight of the airplane ticket scare Shinsuke?
- 6.4 Who does Kenta think is “the most in tune with the mountain”?
- 6.5 What on the mountain does Hiro “give” to Kenta?
- 7.1 Who is at Jii-chan’s house when Kenta discovers the picture of the soldier?
- 7.2 Who does Kenta think the picture of the soldier looks like?

#### **Questions for Thought**

1. In Chapter 1, Kenta introduces a character named Rina, but doesn’t explain what his relationship

- to her is. What can you guess about their relationship? How can you make such a guess?
2. In Chapter 1, how does Kenta's perception of his grandfather begin to change?
  3. As a small boy, what special feelings does Kenta have for Jii-chan's house? What particular features of the house help create those feelings?
  4. Why is it important for Jii-chan to tell Kenta the story of the "Thirty-seven Ishiguros"?
  5. Explain the nature of Kenta's communication with his Uncle Hiro.
  6. How does the photograph mentioned in Chapter 7 help explain what Kenta imagines Jii-chan is imagining in Chapter 1?

### **Topic for Writing**

Kenta has great memories of the time he spent with his grandfather. What special memories do you have of the time you spent with an older relative—maybe a grandparent, maybe an aunt or an uncle. Write an essay describing your experience. Focus on one incident, or on many, as you like.

### **Reading 2 (Chapters 8 ~ 12, pp. 19 ~ 39)**

#### **Comprehension Questions**

- 8.1 What visitor, does Tachikawa Sensei announce, is coming to their class?
- 8.2 Who asks if the visitor is "handsome"?
- 8.3 Who does Kenta compare to a dragonfly?
- 8.4 What present does Kenta decide to give Rina?
- 8.5 What question does Kenta prepare for the visitor?
- 8.6 What English sound does the visitor help Kenta and his classmates practice?
- 9.1 Where does Kenta hide?
- 9.2 Who finds Kenta?
- 10.1 Who is "the petunia queen"?
- 10.2 Who gave her that nickname?
- 11.1 Whose argument does Kenta listen to?
- 11.2 What does Kenta's mother want his father to do?
- 11.3 What did Kenta's mother hear about him in her conference with Tachikawa Sensei?
- 11.4 Does Kenta's father agree to do what his mother wants him to?
- 12.1 Who has a "confrontation"?
- 12.2 Why does Kenta become angry?

#### **Questions for Thought**

1. What is your impression of Kenta in the scene in which he gives Rina a present?
2. What is your impression of Rina?
3. In Chapter 9, Uncle Hiro starts to talk to Kenta about something—but stops himself. Can you imagine what might be on Uncle Hiro's mind?

4. What is Kenta's mother feeling and thinking as she asks Kenta to help water the petunias?
5. What can you understand about Kenta's parents' relationship from their argument?

**Topics for Writing**

1. Is there a family that *never* argues? Maybe not. But surely some families argue less than others. Describe the characteristics of a family that argues as little as possible. Give examples, as necessary, to make your ideas clear.
2. Probably all children have scary experiences. Describe, in as much detail as possible, one scary experience you had as a child.

**Reading 3 (Chapters 13 ~ 18, pp. 40 ~ 57)**

**Comprehension Questions**

- 13.1 During summer, what did Kenta enjoy doing with his friends?
- 13.2 During summer, what chores did Kenta do at Jii-chan's house?
- 13.3 During summer what treat did Baa-chan often prepare for Kenta?
- 13.4 Every year, what do the Ishiguros do on their "special" day—after the fireworks?
- 14.1 What's in the box that Uncle Hiro gives Kenta?
- 14.2 What does Uncle Hiro tell Kenta he is going to "have to" do?
- 14.3 Uncle Hiro wants to keep his conversation with Kenta a secret from whom?
- 15.1 According to Kenta, what was the only "choice" he could make?
- 16.1 What is the first English expression that Uncle Hiro teaches Kenta?
- 16.2 What seems to Kenta to be a "school of sardines"?
- 17.1 What does Kenta discover is "fun"?
- 17.2 Uncle Hiro helps Kenta master the pronunciation of what three-letter English word?
- 18.1 Who did Kenta begin to believe would become the family spokesman?

**Questions for Thought**

1. Kenta begins to believe he is meant to be a spokesman. What type of spokesman do you think he will become?
2. How are Kenta's initial steps in learning a foreign language similar or different from your own?

**Topics for Writing**

1. Describe, in detail, your most memorable summer when you were young.
2. Describe, in detail, an important tradition in your family.

**Reading 4 (Chapters 19 ~ 21, pp. 58 ~ 80)**

**Comprehension Questions**

- 19.1 What club did Kenta join in junior high school?
- 19.2 How did "destiny" hurt Kenta?

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- 19.3 What is Kenta's goal when he takes an English quiz?
- 19.4 How do Brian and Rina communicate?
- 19.5 Whose pronunciation does Kenta correct?
- 19.6 Why do his classmates laugh when Kenta answers, "Yes"?
- 19.7 What does Brian invite Kenta to do?
- 20.1 What's in the envelope that Uncle Hiro gives Kenta?
- 20.2 Who is Kelly? Is he or she a boy or a girl?
- 20.3 What high schools are Rina, Shizuko, and Kenta going to go to, respectively?
- 21.1 What changes, does Kenta say, have come to Mioyama?
- 21.2 What tradition is Kenta glad his family has maintained?
- 21.3 Who does Kenta see walking up his street?

### **Questions for Thought**

1. When Shizuko tries to talk to Kenta, he refuses to listen to her. What do you imagine is the secret she wants to tell him?
2. Explain what you think Kenta feels when he studies English in school.
3. Why does Shizuko call a banana "a tangerine"?
4. Kimura Sensei's apology confuses Kenta. That night, he wakes up and writes a short poem. What is he trying to express?
5. How do Kelly's comments on his poems affect him?
6. How did Kenta feel about Kelly?
7. How do you think the new foreigner may be similar to or different from Brian?

### **Topics for Writing**

1. Kenta writes that "It'd be so much better to be ignorant than to pretend ignorance." What might be the advantages and disadvantages of being ignorant? Discuss the advantages and disadvantages giving clear examples.
2. Life at home can influence performance at school. Discuss how your performance at school, or the performance of someone you know, has been influenced by family life.

## **Reading 5 (Chapters 22 ~ 29, pp. 81 ~ 104)**

### **Comprehension Questions**

- 22.1 How old is Lee?
- 22.2 Who breathes hard as Kenta and Lee climb the mountain?
- 22.3 What memory comes to Lee when he gets to the "mountaintop"?
- 22.4 What, according to Kenta, brought out Lee's memory?
- 23.1 Who is good at starting up "ordinary" conversations?
- 24.1 What experience does Kenta decide to tell Lee about?

## Along the Same Street Study Questions

- 24.2 Who could see her students, even when she was looking at the blackboard?
- 24:3 Who can Lee and Kenta imagine they see running in the sky?
- 25.1 What year was it when Lee met “the boy with metal legs”?
- 25.2 Where was Lee going when he met “the boy with metal legs”?
- 26.1 Who talks to Kenta about “apples and tangerines”?
- 26.2 Who overhears their conversation?
- 27.1 What does Kenta find in Lee’s closet?
- 27.2 What does Lee think is *not* a big difference?
- 28.1 What did Lee enjoy cooking with a campfire when he was young?

### Questions for Thought

1. Compare Brian with Lee Winslow.
2. Why, do you think, Kenta immediately feels that Lee “might just be the type of person” he could talk about a lot of things with?
3. Explain, in detail, all Kenta was thinking when he decided to pretend he had dropped a hook?
4. How are Kenta’s and Lee’s stories similar?
5. What does Jii-chan try to explain to Kenta using “apples and tangerines”?
6. Explain Lee’s thinking on similarities and differences.
7. Why does Lee say thank you to the pork and beans?

### Topics for Writing

1. Lee says to Kenta, “I hope greatly, that I am something more than the country I was accidentally born in.” What do you think about Lee’s way of viewing himself? How do you view *yourself*?
2. When Lee meets people in Mioyama for the first time, he talks with them “about the plain old ordinary things in their lives”? What do you think about this approach to cross-cultural interaction?
3. Human behavior can be individual (John likes tennis, but Mike doesn’t), cultural (“We Japanese . . .”), or universal (“All parents everywhere love their children.” Write an essay analyzing your own behavior in terms of the individual, cultural, and universal.

## Reading 6 (Chapters 30 ~ 36, pp. 105 ~ 127)

### Comprehension Questions

- 30.1 What assignment did Miss Forester give Lee, when he was a young boy?
- 30.2 Why, did David McDonald say in class, he couldn’t do his homework?
- 31.1 In kindergarten, what did Lee do to get a girl to notice him?
- 31.2 What judgement does Lee make about Kenta’s feelings *now* for the girl he was smitten by in elementary school?
- 32.1 What information does Lee have that “shocks” Kenta?

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- 32.2 What's unusual about the map that Uncle Hiro drew for Lee?
- 33.1 What is "English Island"?
- 33.2 What details does Uncle Hiro reveal to Kenta regarding his trip to America?
- 33.3 What does Kenta write and give to Lee?
- 34.1 What was in Lee's mind as he cut grass—and his mouth moved?
- 35.1 How did Jii-chan break his arm?
- 35.2 What does Jii-chan say he did do—but really didn't?
- 36.1 How did Lee get his nickname, "the timid tank"?
- 36.2 Who's story was written in Chapter 7 of Kenta's textbook?
- 36.3 Who mentions China in Kenta's class?
- 36.4 Who goes to talk to the principal about "the China Incident"?
- 36.5 Why does Jii-chan end up in the hospital for a second time?

### **Questions for Thought**

1. What did David McDonald's experience make Lee think about himself?
2. Explain why Uncle Hiro hadn't told Kenta that he'd once met Lee in America.
3. What feelings does Kenta express in his poem, "Dragonfly"?
4. When they talk in the hospital, what can Kenta ascertain about Jii-chan?

### **Topic for Writing**

1. Our perceptions are influenced by what we were told when we were young, by our beliefs, and by our individual view of the world. Write an essay discussing how perception might affect how well we can understand people from groups and cultures other than our own.
2. When he was young, Lee used to imagine he was Martin Luther King, Jr. What heroes did you have when you were young? What aspects of their characters or acts impressed you? To what degree has your life been influenced by them.

## **Reading 7 (Chapters 37 ~ 41, pp. 128 ~ 150)**

### **Comprehension Questions**

- 37.1 Who comes to Kenta's house for the "pow wow"?
- 37.2 What, according to Uncle Tomoki, is the "privileged position" Kenta's father is in?
- 37.3 What does Kenta's mother think of all his father (Shinsuke) said at the pow wow?
- 37.4 Why does Kenta chase Uncle Tomoki out the door?
- 38.1 How did the law of 1946 affect Jii-chan?
- 38.2 When Tomoki was a college student, what did Baa-chan ask him to stop trying to do?
- 39.1 What does Aunt Noriko come to Kenta's bedroom to talk to him about?
- 39.2 Who is Noriko referring to, when she talks of "this girl back in high school"?
- 39.3 How was the corn field useful to Noriko, when she was in high school?

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- 39.4 What does Noriko tell Kenta Jii-chan did after Baa-chan planted some petunias?
- 40.1 Who tells Kenta the story of Nishimoto Gen?
- 40.2 Who, in 1946, gave Gen what present?
- 41.1 Who did Lee mail “The Long Answer, Part Five” to?
- 41.2 What did Lee do for the first time when he was fifteen?
- 41.3 Who did Lee and Randy choose to help them buy some wine?
- 41.4 Where did Lee guess James had been for the last seven years?
- 41.5 What was the primary reason Lee’s mother got angry with him?

### **Questions for Thought**

1. Summarize what Uncle Tomoki thinks about the things Jii-chan has experienced and said, both recently and in the past.
2. What do you think of Baa-chan’s advice to her son, Tomoki, “to let it go”?
3. What is Noriko’s goal in coming to speak to Kenta?
4. What does Tomoki tell Kenta that is different from what Jii-chan told him when he was a small boy? (see Chapter 5)
5. How, according to Tomoki, did Gen’s father and Jii-chan feel about Gen’s experience with the American soldiers?
6. Why does Tomoki tell Kenta about Gen?
7. Why does Lee send Kenta “The Long Answer, Part Five”?

### **Topics for Writing**

1. There is a suggestion that Jii-chan may have suffered (and may still *be* suffering) from trauma. Try to find some articles about war trauma—and about how experts say ex-soldiers (and their family and friends) can best deal with it. Summarize what you feel it is important to know about trauma, using these articles as sources.
2. Write an essay analyzing the strategies friends and families sometimes use to talk about difficult topics, using Ch. 36 ~ 41 as your main source.

## **Reading 8 (Chapters 42 ~ 48, pp. 151 ~ 170)**

### **Comprehension Questions**

- 42.1 Which brother does Akihiko feel he was most like?
- 42.2 According to Akihiko, who suggested that he go to a cooking school in Oita?
- 42.3 What topic does Akihiko accidentally introduce to Kenta?
- 43.1 According to Tomoki, how are his books on the top shelf different from the ones he keeps below?
- 44.1 What object used in wartime most scared Kenta?

## Along the Same Street Study Questions

- 44.2 As Kenta imagined the war, what always remained the most important question for him?
- 44.3 When Kenta imagines himself in the war, where exactly does he usually imagine himself?
- 45.1 What does Tomoki think Jii-chan needs to do?
- 45.2 Which of Shinsuke's siblings are on his side?
- 45.3 When his father is silent, who does Kenta think should speak up?
- 45.4 What information does Tomoki give about Lee?
- 45.5 Finally, what does Kenta say he will do?
- 46.1 What does Kenta think Jii-chan's legs look like?
- 46.2 What does Kenta think he can see as he gazes at Jii-chan's face?
- 47.1 Why does Kenta think so many children were "deceived"?
- 48.1 What does Jii-chan suspect Tomoki wants to do?
- 48.2 What does Kenta tell Jii-chan that Jii-chan says is certainly wrong?

### Questions for Thought

1. How does Akihiko's story likely influence Kenta's idea of Jii-chan?
2. Why do you think the author doesn't give the specific names of the books that Tomoki has on his shelves?
3. Kenta says that effective soldiers in World War II could have only believed in one of two possible things. What do you think about his idea?
4. Near the end of Chapter 49, after Kenta has gone upstairs, Uncle Hiro and Kenta's father seem to have a conversation. What do you think Uncle Hiro may have said to Kenta's father?
5. What do you think of Kenta's explanation for why children are deceived in wartime?

### Topics for Writing

1. Kenta reads about many different places and events. Choose three or four of them, ones you're least familiar with, and investigate what role they played in World War II.
2. Kenta tries his best to imagine what Jii-chan was thinking and feeling during the war. What do you imagine the average soldier felt? How do you think he was able to do the things he was asked to do? You don't have to limit yourself to the soldiers of any particular country.
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of de-humanizing the enemy during a war?

## Reading 9 (Chapters 49 ~ 52, pp. 171 ~ 191)

### Comprehension Questions

- 49.1 What does Kenta decide to apologize to Jii-chan about?
- 49.2 Why *doesn't* Kenta apologize?
- 50.1 Who does Kenta discover in Uncle Hiro's workshop?
- 50.2 What are Uncle Hiro and his guest doing in the workshop?
- 50.3 What does Lee tell Kenta is the real reason he came to Japan?



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- 50.4 According to Lee, how did Uncle Hiro really hurt his leg?
- 50.5 According to Lee, why were the two American teenage boys upset that the young Hiro turned left down a gravel road?
- 50.6 Why didn't the black men call the police?
- 51.1 Why did Lee decide the time was not right to make his apology to Jii-chan?
- 51.2 What does Kenta feel like as he peers into Jii-chan's house, watching him take his blood pressure?
- 51.3 What does Kenta see Jii-chan clean?
- 51.4 Heading home, why does Kenta suddenly begin to run?
- 51.5 What memory from his childhood makes him remember something he's read about the war?
- 52.1 How does Jii-chan react when Kenta tells him about discovering the soldier in the drawer?
- 52.2 What news do Kenta and Jii-chan see on the TV?
- 52.3 What does Kenta tell Jii-chan about "the China incident"?
- 52.4 Who tells who to get out?

### **Questions for Thought**

1. How does the latest passage that Kenta reads in one of Tomoki's books (p. 171) affect his thinking about Jii-chan?
2. What do you think of Lee's long explanation as to why he hadn't been able to speak about racism in Kenta's class? Do you think his idea can be applied to other people in similar situations?
3. How was the Ishiguro celebration of *Obon*, in 1995, different to Kenta from the *Obon* he described in Chapter 13?
4. Chapter 52 is titled "Pressure." One reason is that we see Jii-chan taking his blood pressure. What other reason might the author have had for deciding on this title?

### **Topics for Writing**

1. How common is it that a fear of being misunderstood prevents someone from saying something they need to say—or from doing something they need to do?
2. Write an essay about pressure. When do people feel it? How can they deal with it? How can they get rid of it?

## **Reading 10 (Chapters 53 ~ 56, pp. 192 ~ 211)**

### **Comprehension Questions**

- 53.1 Where does Kenta discover "the soldier in the drawer"? What does he realize about the soldier?
- 53.2 What does Hiro tell Kenta about Akira and the war?
- 53.3 Where might Isamu still be alive?
- 53.4 How does Isamu appear in Kenta's imagination?

- 53.5 Why does the imagined Shigeru ask Akira to go to war?
- 53.6 What does the imagined Akira say were lies?
- 53.7 Why are the imagined soldiers doing rocks, scissors, and paper?
- 53.8 Where does Kenta imagine Jii-chan fighting in the war?
- 53.9 How does the imagined Jii-chan escape death?
- 53.10 Who does Kenta imagine flying around the edge of a roulette wheel?
- 53.11 As he imagines the war, where does Kenta run to?
- 53.12 Who finds Kenta in his hiding place?
- 54.1 What does Kenta do as “an absurd last resort”?
- 55.1 What stupid thing(s) does Kenta think he says to Rina?
- 55.2 Where did Rina get the lyrics for her song?
- 55.3 What favor does Rina ask Kenta?
- 56.1 Who sees Kenta and Rina head up the mountain?
- 56.2 At first, where do they sit and talk?
- 56.3 What does Rina bring for them to eat?

**Questions for Thought**

1. What does it seem are the last words Jii-chan ever speaks to Kenta? How well does Kenta think these words express “the real” Jii-chan?
2. Why does Kenta have such a hard time talking with Rina? Are his difficulties typical of boys in this situation?
3. What does Rina mean when she asks Kenta if he’d like “another chance”?
4. Kenta imagines Jii-chan’s heart as being full of “savagery and love.” Explain how this can be.
5. Do you think Kenta achieves anything through the story he imagines? If so, what?

**Topics for Writing**

1. Perhaps you have friends and relatives whose pasts you sometimes wonder about. Choose one person, then explain the things you know about them, explain something about their past you’ve wondered about (never been sure about), and finally imagine what you think they may have done or not.
2. Have you ever taken a walk in nature with a friend? Did you feel as if the surrounding nature made it easier or less easy to talk? Describe the experience.

**Reading 11 (Chapters 57 ~ 60, pp. 212 ~ 235)**

**Comprehension Questions**

- 57.1 Where do Hiro and Kenta have their chat?
- 57.2 According to Hiro, who could and couldn’t be satisfied with spinning tops only?
- 57.3 What descriptions remind the reader of Jii-chan’s continued “presence”?

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- 57.4 What story did Lee tell Hiro about his mother?
- 58.1 When Kenta goes into her house, what does he see Baa-chan doing?
- 58.2 Just after the war, what impossible thing did Jii-chan decide he would do?
- 58.3 What important fact does Kenta learn about the soldier in the drawer?
- 58.4 What, finally, does Kenta ask Baa-chan for permission to do?
- 59.1 Before Lee's arrival, who thinks who is going to apologize to whom?
- 59.2 When does Lee come to visit the Ishiguros?
- 59.3 Where do the Ishiguros decide to serve their meal? Why?
- 59.4 Who has no choice but to sit at the head of the table?
- 59.5 Who serves as the interpreter?
- 59.6 What does Lee pass around the table?
- 60.1 What children's game does Kenta's father try to introduce to Lee?
- 60.2 Who shows whom how to best skip rocks?
- 60.3 What experience, when they were young, did Kenta's father and Lee share?
- 60.4 What does Kenta successfully teach both his father and Lee to do?

### **Questions for Thought**

1. Remember the map that Lee tells Kenta about in Chapter 32—how does it relate to the things Hiro tells Kenta he has imagined about Lee's mother?
2. There is an awful lot of running away in this novel. Try to remember all the examples. Who ran away from what?
3. How does the story Baa-chan tells Kenta change (or not change) your impression of the true Jii-chan?
4. At the "apology" meal, how exactly does Lee bring Baa-chan's story of Jii-chan to a conclusion? Is it a good ending? Is it a fair ending?
5. In Chapter 60, what can be learned about developing friendships with people from other cultures?

### **Topics for Writing**

1. *Along the Same Street* seems to suggest that an understanding of very complex history is important—but that it is not an easy task to find a reliable partner to discuss that history candidly with. Hiro, for example, suggests to Kenta that if he talks with one million people, he might find one who would be interested enough to hear all he's ever thought about Jii-chan. How important is it to grasp the nuances of history (whether personal or global)—and how difficult is it to discuss that history with others?
2. As a family, the Ishiguros worry about how to be the best hosts for their foreign visitor, Lee. Write a short guide for people who are considering becoming a host family about how to best host a

foreign guest.

**Reading 12 (Chapters 61 ~ 64, pp. 236 ~ 253)**

**Comprehension Questions**

- 61.1 What does Shizuko want to tell Kenta but doesn't?
- 61.2 How does Kenta make himself confident that he knows what Shizuko would have said if she had said what she knew?
- 61.3 Where does Kenta imagine Shizuko taking him?
- 62.1 What did Kenta finally get "right"?
- 62.2 What had Rina waited a long time for?
- 63.1 What does Kenta imagine as a giant closet?
- 63.2 What university is Kenta most considering?
- 63.3 What new information does Rina have for him regarding "the barbarian"?
- 63.4 Who in the family most supports Kenta's plan to go to America? Who is most against the idea?
- 64.1 Where does Kenta decide to enroll in a language school? Why does he choose that location?
- 64.2 Why does Rina's "sad-happy face" make Kenta happy?
- 64.3 What advice does Hiro have for Kenta regarding his stay in the U.S.?
- 64.4 According to Hiro, who lives "along the same street"?
- 64.5 What does Kenta pack inside his rice cooker?
- 64.6 Whose family in America does Kenta imagine himself visiting?
- 64.7 What does Kenta feel he's holding as he walks through the park with Rina's present in hand?

**Questions for Thought**

- 1. Kenta tells us, "There was still so much to understand, so much to imagine, so much to imagine and understand. That's why I had to go." What do you think of his view of things?
- 2. Whose way of thinking do you agree with more, Kenta's mother, or his father's?
- 3. Consider the last two paragraphs of the novel. How well do they serve as an ending?

**Topics for Writing**

- 1. Write an essay, with details from the story, explaining what the theme of the novel is, and how the author develops it.
- 2. Choose a character other than Kenta, Jii-chan, Hiro, and Lee—and explain how he or she plays a key role in the story.